

**Daniel Mongiardo  
Inaugural Address  
Frankfort, KY  
December 11, 2007  
2 p.m.**

Today is a beautiful day – not because of the weather, but because it is the fulfillment of the legacy our ancestors provided us. It is democracy in action. A day everyone can celebrate - the orderly transition of power. An orderly procession that began when our nation was young – when Kentucky was still America's first frontier.

Kentucky was then a place people came to strike out on a new journey, to find adventure, to seek fortune. Where brave men and women of all nations, creeds, and political beliefs came not just to find, but to create, a better life. It was a rugged land that needed taming, but our ancestors did not shrink from this challenge. They embraced it. Working together they made the American dream a Kentucky dream.

It was that same American dream that led a young man named Dominic and his two brothers to leave Italy and come to Harlan County, Kentucky a century ago. Not knowing what lay ahead, but with hope and promise, they came to work in Kentucky's coalmines. It was not easy. It took hard work, but working together they made a life for themselves. The opportunity Kentucky gave them allowed Dominic to bring his children from the Old world to the new.

The promise of America allowed his son, Jimmy, to grow and prosper. My father, with me today, left school at 15 and went to work to provide for the family. He married my mother, Katherine, bringing her from Italy. He, too, had an American dream. From nothing they built a life in Eastern Kentucky.

Like Kentucky's story, their story had hardship and pain. The son they loved, whom they named Dominic and whom I never knew, was lost because quality health care was not available in Eastern Kentucky then. But, like Kentucky, they endured.

Kentucky gave my parents the opportunity to prosper and they gave me the chance to follow my dreams – through Hazard High School, Transylvania University, and to the University of Kentucky School of Medicine.

Their commitment to that American dream led me back to my home in Eastern Kentucky to practice medicine. It led me to the Kentucky State Senate. It led me here today where I am proud and honored to become Kentucky's Lt. Governor.

The story of my family is a uniquely American story, a uniquely Kentucky story.

It is from this Kentucky story that Steve Beshear and our entire administration embark in a new direction.

Working together, Steve Beshear and I want to make that Kentucky Dream available to everyone in this great commonwealth.

I'm from Eastern Kentucky and Steve Behsear is from Western Kentucky. From Hazard to Dawson Springs people have been telling us that it's time to find common ground – that it's time to put partisanship aside and get things done.

I'm proud to be serving with Steve Beshear. He's someone who doesn't just talk about bringing all sides together, he does it.

Governor Beshear will be a leader we can look up to. A leader we can be proud of. A leader everyone can work with.

The road ahead will not be easy. Kentucky's problems are many, but so are our opportunities. Working together, we will begin to solve them. First, we must restore trust in our government. Without trust, it will be difficult to effect the changes Kentucky needs.

Then, we must restore a strong economy in all regions of Kentucky by strengthening our existing businesses and by fostering and attracting new businesses and good-paying jobs.

Our abundant natural resources can be developed into alternative sources of energy. This will make us less dependent on foreign oil and it will create new jobs.

We can be a national leader in adventure tourism: using our natural beauty to become a destination for people all over America.

We can tackle the problems confronting our greatest resource: our citizens. The education of our children and the health of all our people must be improved.

And we must train our workforce to give them the skills they need to compete in the global economy because Kentucky cannot afford to fall further behind.

But we will need everyone working together to achieve these lofty goals. We will need everyone's ideas and everyone's input.

When Dominic left Italy a hundred years ago he could not imagine what was before him – certainly he could not envision that his grandson would become Kentucky's Lieutenant Governor.

Likewise, we cannot see into the future. But Kentucky's history proves we can prevail. It will not be easy and the way may not always be clear, but we must be like our ancestors and meet the challenges that lie before us.

I know we can conquer these challenges because Kentuckians have done so before.

May God bless each and every one of us and God bless the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Thank you.

###